THE

Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL.

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE; FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"*Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day.*"

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THE *Theosophist* of October and November last contains an article on the "Yoga Vidya," which appears to be the Science of Psychology, as understood and practised by the ascetics of Ancient India. This knowledge and its application, though it has suffered a decadence, is not obsolete, but many of the phenomena pertaining to it, are as generally recognised in India, as other facts pertaining to sciences of a less esoteric nature.

Krishna affirmed, amongst other things, the power to atomize the body, the power to magnify the body, and the power to neutralize the gravity of the body as illustrated in the phenomena of levitation. This latter phenomena is of no uncommon occurrence in the east, and the writer of the article we refer to doubts if the "phenomena seen by so many reputable persons would be seriously denied." Spiritualistic literature teems with evidences of the levitation of ponderable matter and human bodies; we have ourselves witnessed it many times, and on one occasion corroborated our sense of sight by placing our hands on the soles of the shoes of the levitated individual, and quite recently a professional gentleman of undoubted veracity, related to us instances of the levitation of his two sons, one of whom had, in the presence of witnesses (whilst so levitated) removed a bolt from a lofty ceiling, and brought it with him to the ground. Our theory for this particular manifestation has been the operation of a magnetic attractive force directed by spiritual energies, by which the gravity, or earth attraction, has been for the time neutralized, but the writer in question goes further than this, and affirms on the authority of Madame Blavatsky, hat the individual has the power innate to "polarize his body so as to cause himself to be 'light as a flake of cotton' and rise into the air," and reversing the process "make his body abnormally heavy." Now, we are not prepared to deny this assertion, we have great faith in the capacity of the will to accomplish many things that are deemed impossible, but in corroboration of our own theory we have had much evidence, whilst of the other we have as yet none. It is argued by the writer that in relation to the atomizing and indefinite expansion of the body, Krishna referred not to the Material, but to the Astral or soul body, known to modern students of occult phenomena, as the "Double" being the internal counterpart of the physical form detachable by the the operation of magnetism, and in some instances by the simple volition of the individual, and the acceptation of this interpretation brings the assertion within the bounds of probability. Those having experience with clairvoyant media, know that not only their perceptions, but what they believe to be themselves will pass from a closed room, travel vast distances, dive into and explore the ocean's depths, enter any material stronghold, and describe minutely their surroundings. If asked if their perceptions alone grasp these things, they will tell you *they* are there, and not till their attention is called to the fact that their material body is sitting or reclining quiescent at the starting place do they realize that they have a duplicate form. This form which passes through the densest matter must be of an exceedingly plastic nature, and would doubtless be capable of both extension and contraction, thereby fulfilling at least measurably the affirmation of Krishna. Many of our readers who are inexperienced in magnetism, will doubt the existence of the "Double," and our affirmations concerning the power of Clairvoyant Mediums, we would refer such to the works of those who have preceded us in Psychological experiments of this class, and think that in the works of Denton, Gregory, Deleuze, Billot, and Cahagnet, they will find ample evidence of the fact that the individual intelligence, clothed with a form resembling its physical one, can transport itself (under certain conditions) to vast distances, and that matter offers no obstruction to its progress.

It is of vast importance that the *rationale* of these phenomena should be more widely known, much of the prejudice against Spiritualism arises from a prevailing impression that the manifestations upon which it relies are supernatural, or at variance with natural law. If it

can be shown that these manifestations are in harmony with the laws of nature, and no more extraordinary in themselves than many other phenomena of Physical Science, it will remove an obstruction from the doors of the temple which has hitherto prevented vast numbers from entering the vestibule; let it be as widely known as possible, that all truly spiritualistic phenomena admit of philosophical explanation, and that the word *supernatural* is out of place in our vocabulary.

WISE WORDS FROM SWEDENBORG.

CONTINUED.

37. We are now to dwell upon such thoughts as have a reference to the Great Soul of the Universe, otherwise called by men God; although at different times, and by different nations, the Incomprehensible Being has been spoken of under other designations; strictly speaking, he can only be viewed through the medium of those outbirths of His Wisdom which constitute the visible Universe. Thus, He, as a Spirit, is embodied, and gives forth to His intelligent creatures, those expressions of His Will which, when understood and obeyed, become to man, the starting point for higher attainments. And as we have already remarked, there is no other way in which the advantageous starting point is to be attained, than in the study of those manifestations of the Infinite Will which are to be found in Nature, and your own souls. 38. Thus it is a very forcible fact, that the man who devotes his time to this pursuit, will of necessity, advance to a position in which he can better comprehend the so-called secrets of nature, and thus of the essential Being of the Supreme. 39. All of those minute, and yet perfect laws of nature, which are seen to be in operation in the universe, proclaim the existence of a presiding and overruling first cause, or Principle, from which, however incomprehensible it may be thought, all things have their origin; but not to be understood, or computed by the finite and fallible powers which man possesses. The combined mind of the whole created intelligence of the immortals who fill the spheres of existence, could never serve to reach the outskirts of His domain, who, creating all things, also controls all things. Descend, if you will, to the most minute creature which possesses life; you may examine the mechanical structure of that creature, even though it be of the most minute dimensions requiring the highest power of the microscope to reveal its organization; but when you come to enquire respecting the principle of life which animates that wondrously beautiful mechanism, then you are at once baffled, quite as much so as you would be when standing before the mystery of your own being. And if this be so, who by searching can find out God, or become cognizant of His nature as that nature really exists. This has been ever felt by men who have come in contact with the awful thought: who and what is God; and think not that I would now presume to advance a single theory which might seem to have the effect of throwing light on His Incomprehensible Nature, but which would be after all, but an attempted illustration to reflect the Great Unknown. 40. When you can find the centre of the Universe; when you can declare that you have sounded its awful depths, and discovered its circumference, and are cognizant of all its deep motives; then will you be in a position to tell mankind who, and what is God. But on the other hand, when your mind has arrived at that condition of pristine excellence which it may attain to in the observance of the laws of your being, and those which are involved in the more palpable physical universe, then shall you be able to say: These are parts of His ways, but the thunder of his power who can understand, and having accomplished this much, you will enjoy a soul satisfaction regarding the Existence of the Infinite, which shall impart to your existence a charm and a power which will have the effect of raising you to heights of usefulness and happiness of which you can now form no conception. 41. From this you will perceive, when I come to speak of the human soul, how true it is, that in it, God alone is found to the degree He can be at all comprehended. 42. I must now, however, dwell somewhat on the undeniable fact that, although God is thus incomprehensible, mankind have throughout every period of their history, made the attempt to personate Him, so that their finite intelligence might the better grasp the fact of His existence. They were in a measure led to adopt this course, through the prevalence of the external sphere demanding materialized forms to satisfy the sensuous principle, and it is only in proportion as that sensuous principle becomes subservient to the more interior, or spiritual, that the form otherwise esteemed necessary, will give place to conceptions of a higher and truer nature. 43. But it must not be lost sight of that, even under the many personal representations of the Supreme Deity which have been in vogue among the ancient nations and people of the earth, there was a recognized spiritual essence, which was esteemed so completely supersensual that man's intellect could not in any degree fathom it; and thus in nearly every instance, in which it was found desirable to formulate the conception of Deitv into a personality like unto man, the mind itself which contemplated that personality, also recognized a more diffused and exalted nature than man could ever lay claim to. 44. This practice, however, was but an expedient after all to aid man's intellectual capacity at a time, when as I have said, the external sphere predominated, and the interior life was to a large extent yet unopened to realize the more spiritual essences of the universe, and thus the Infinite in all His vast and incomprehensible characteristics. 45. I must now dwell upon the attempt, which I also made myself in the same direction, viz., to personate, and localize the Supreme Author of all things. When dwelling upon the many forms which material nature presents, I was led inevitably to the contemplations of man himself; and as I recognized in him the very perfection of forms, I was further led to see as I supposed, in what way all natural objects led up to man, and thus that the vast universe itself did in reality, constitute one Grand Man; and He the Supreme Jehovah, the sum total of all things; and from whom all things in their vast variety and degree proceeded. And having arrived at this original conception, I felt that I had at last grasped the truth in reference to God; and thence made it my endeavour to make all other ideas square with this: a full exposition of which will be found in my *True Christian Religion*, and also elaborated and illustrated in my other theological writings. 46. To a mind no farther advanced than the plane afforded under the system of the Protestant Church, such a conception as that presented in my system, is particularly attractive; and thus many of the members of that church, have been led from time to time, to adopt my views as a considerable advance upon those held by themselves; especially when it becomes known that, in place of a trinity of persons, I presented a trinity of attributes, or operations: the Father, the Son, and the Divine Proceeding, as suitable exhibitions of the One Infinite and Incomprehensible Being called God; standing in such relationships to man, His creature, as were most adapted to man's several wants and necessities. 47. But then, having advanced this far, I felt it necessary to take another step, and to render more palpable the Deity I had constructed, by bringing him into still closer relationship with man. Hence arose my doctrine of the Lord and the Divine Humanity, with the scheme of salvation, built up really on the conception held by the Catholic Church, but so far improved as I supposed, as to render it more comprehensible to the reason of man. There are two things which stand out very prominently in the manifested life of man; first, his yearning desire for association; and, second, his sense of dependance on some one more powerful than he is himself. This arises from that essential attribute of his spiritual nature, which allies him not only with the Infinite One, but also with his kind throughout the universe, growing up indeed, into this perfect state, through the lower elementaries of nature, and manifesting itself there, until it assumes importance, and calls for intelligent re-

cognition in the experience of man himself. 48. Now it is also felt by man to be essential to his well-being, that he should be able to grasp the conception of Deity in some palpable form. And recognising this fact, I also deemed it necessary to the construction of any theological system, that the prominent and central object should be the one above all, on whom men are dependent for life and all things; and who is to them at once the oracle to instruct, and the power to accomplish the great ends involved in their existence. 49. In my search for the soul, I failed to find any objective form; so also in my more earnest search for the Governor of the Universe. Consequently, having already in my mind the theological conception of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the New Testament, and formulated by the church of my day, I felt that in this I had a suitable groundwork on which to build up the ever present and recognizable form of a Divine Human, on whom man should be at all times dependant, and from whom he should likewise receive the law to guide him along the progressive plane of existence. 50. Thus I constructed a God which I placed in the Christian Temple; the focalization so to speak, of all the communicable attributes of an Eternal and Incomprehensible Being whom I had failed to discover, except as the great Principle underlying all things; giving them life, regulating their movements, and shaping their destiny according to His sovereign will. And when I had thus, by this process, brought God near to man, then I felt that all had been done that was needful to fill up the yearning desire for a suitable support, and an object on which man's affections might supremely be fixed. 51. You have, in my doctrine of the Divine Human, otherwise the Lord Jesus Christ, the Jehovah-Jesus, the groundwork of all which follows in relation to the Deity. He is the central Sun of the Universe, the author of life and of salvation, the repository of every blessing, the Alpha and Omega, before whom men must bow, and whom men must acknowledge as the Universal King. It is He who manifests His glory before the angelic spirits who fill the celestial heavens; and who keeps the hells in order; opening with the keys of His sovereign will, the portals of either to admit the creatures who are dependant upon Himself, in accordance with their ruling love of either good or evil. 52. I need not dwell here, upon the mystery of incarnation which is so prominent a part of my doctrine of the Divine Human; or endeavour to reconcile the innumerable difficulties which I now see to beset my scheme of redemption; it will be enough for me to point out, that the almost blind acceptance of the then prevailing theological views, led me to overlook inconsistencies in detail, and thus threw me off the track of a more harmonious delineation of the relation which existed between God and man. 53. I freely admit that, it accords with the religious sentiment in man, to feel that his God is so really one with himself; and that he may thus think of him as a man, with all the attributes of humanity; and that he may, morever, cherish the anticipation of seeing Him in His Glory, in due time; but we must not be led away by mere sentiment, but rather seek for, and be guided by the truth; for after all, that is the only firm basis on which can be built the fabric of human happiness. 54. Consequently, when it is admitted, that God is so utterly incomprehensible, and can only be discovered as that great and awful Principle of life which underlies all things in the universe, it then becomes our paramount duty to seek Him in the laws of life which he hath appointed, and to learn clearly to understand these laws, and live in subjection to them; thus realizing the unity and well-being of the entire intelligent creation to consist in the harmonious relation of all the parts, which in an incomprehensible degree, comprises the infinite body, of which Deity is the essential soul, the life, the mainspring, the inexhaustible repository of happiness, and who would have His creatures to realize more of Himself in the cultivation of their own natures, and thus in the subjection to His manifested Will. 55. You will thus find, that this God is not one afar off, but near you; ever around you, and within you; at once your strength and solace; and in whom you may repose under all the changing circumstances which beset your growth and progress, ever running parallel with your own unending being, so that you may be able to say with one of old: "Whom have I in the expanse but Thee; and there is none on the earth whom I can desire beyond Thee." Thus expressing that deep feeling of childlike confidence and unfailing trust, which ever enables the soul the more fully to realize the constant presence of Him in whom it lives, and moves, and has its being."

Marnias Meti.

Melbourne, January, 1880. H. J. B.

COMMUNICATED AT A CIRCLE IN CASTLEMAINE.

I am, my dearly beloved friends, the man whom your friend has just introduced to your notice by the name of Robert Dale Owen. You have heard of me before I believe, from our distant country, where I resided during my earth life, and since I have left earth life you are aware, I am told, that I have communicated with the inhabitants of earth many times, through different mediums, and your friends who are with me to-night, desired me to come and make myself known to you, in order to give you pleasure, which they tell me, my controlling will afford you. Rich indeed is the treasure of mediumship, would that it was more valued and spiritually cultivated, that we higher spirits, who seek light and purity and truth, might the more easily come and communicate with mortals, and give them the intense satisfaction of knowing that we are all interested in these proceedings on earth; and that by their fitting themselves for our control, we could bring them help and comfort in many a difficulty and danger, by which, during the course of their earth life they are beset. Oh! it would yield them all joy and profit if men would learn the real true value of mediumship, then wrong-doing and vice would cease from the earth; happiness and virtue would take their place, and truth would be sought after with the earnestness which is now devoted to gain and self-interest. The good of humanity would be studied in everything, and man would learn to promote the interests, the happiness, and the improvement of his brother man.

Now, my dear friend, this is our object in coming to you to-night, it is to help your spiritual development that you may be a means of doing good unto your fellows, and setting a light before their feet whereby they may walk in the ways of truth and righteousness, a *path*, if they once fully understood, they would be more anxious to follow. And it is for this end we come to you, that we may lead you on, so that others may follow in your footsteps, the way seeming long to you I dare say before your development reaches its fruition, but never mind the length of time, "It is a *long*, long lane indeed, that has *no* turning."

So my friends hope for your turning soon, and desire the help of the highest, best, and purest spirits, that you may succeed in that class of development your spirit friends desire to impart unto you.

The friends who are here to-night are numerous and influential, both as regards mind and spiritual power, so that all which is wanted is your own cultivation, strength, and further development, to render your mediumship a perfect and an excellent one, useful and most needful at the present time, when mediums of the highest class are most important for the carrying out of the present work.

Oh! spirits are working diligently now and earnestly for the world's good; work ye also diligently and earnestly, and nothing can prevent you from succeeding in your undertaking.

Now friends, the time of your writing I am told has elapsed, and therefore I will not trespass longer, but conclude with the hope that my words will be remembered by you, and that they will also give you pleasure, so much so that you will be willing for me to address you again at a future time, when I may have some more encouragement to give, as well as praise for your progress attained,—Yours fraternally and sympathetically,

ROBERT DALE OWEN.

Wednesday, 28th January, 1880.

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

ITEMS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR,—The readers of the *Harbinger* in Victoria will be pleased to hear that the sister colony, New South Wales, is to have an organ devoted to "Freethought" in all its phases, conducted by an able writer in the person of Mr. Haviland. Long may it reign! I have been busily engaged lately, in replying to a correspondent of the *Matrimonial Chronicle*, who is doing all he can to prejudice the public mind against Spiritualism. In his last reply to me, he tells his readers that the word "Spiritualism" means, "one ignorant of the laws of nature;" so much for this absurd definition; then further on, he speaks of some of the wisest and cleverest being in our ranks; here is inconsistency, for wise and clever men know something about natural law. There is so much NONSENSE in this letter that, suffice it to say, I have written an answer to it, and must thank the editor of the *Matrimonial Chronicle* for publishing my communications in defence of Spiritualism, which he has done, notwithstanding the fact that he has openly stated in a previous issue, that he is opposed to Deism, Atheism, Unitarianism, &c. In Sydney, we have now Messrs. Bright and Tyerman doing good work at the theatres.

On the 21st ultimo, Mr. and Mrs. Gellatley, of Mudgee, paid us a visit. We had a sitting with good results; loud raps, table keeping time to music, trance orations, &c.

A few days ago I took a trip to Sydney. The Lyceum there is in a flourishing state, and a very pleasant morning I spent there. This institution deserves the support of every true Spiritualist. More labourers in the vineyard of Spiritualism, and more Lyceums are sadly required.

F. E. S. HEWISON.

Bathurst, February 11th, 1880.

MAGNETIC HEALING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR,—I have taken great interest in the various accounts that have been published from time to time relative to Drs. Mack and Newton's wonderful curing powers by laying on of hands, especially those relating to cures at a distance. Now, I want to know if you, or any of your readers, could give me some information relating thereto.

First, is there any known limit to the distance at which such cures can be performed? Secondly, if there is not, could a person, say here or any other equally distant place, be cured by sending home a lock of their hair to either of the above-named Doctors? And, thirdly, if there is a limit, could Dr. Mack or Dr. Newton tell whether a disease was curable on receiving a lock of the patient's hair, so that he might go home to them if he wished?

The reason that I ask these apparently extraordinary questions is because in most of the accounts published the visible appearance of the controlling spirit accompanies the cure, and I inferred that probably the spirit would have as much power in a place remote as one adjacent to the curing medium.

Hoping you will satisfy my thirst for information, you will greatly oblige

Yours truly,

February 23rd. INQUIRER.

[The gift of healing is possessed by many persons in degree, and may be cultivated by application and study of the laws pertaining to its successful use. The healing influence is peculiar to the individual, but is supplemented to a greater or lesser degree by power drawn from spiritual sources, sometimes from individual spirits. If a thorough sympathy can be established between the sufferer and the operator, the minds of each being withdrawn from all that is external to the object in view, then distance is no drawback. It is rare, however, with persons residing on opposite sides of the world that such conditions are practicable. Where the healer has to project the healing influence to a person not in the receptive condition, the force becomes attenuated by distance, and however much he may be aided by spirits, the *substance* which forms the vehicle of conveyance and the basis of the healing power, cannot be conveyed so efficiently as at close quarters. Moreover, the operation would be exhaustive to the medium, much energy being dissipated. The lock of hair or any object belonging to the patient is simply a connecting link to them. Whether Drs. Mack or Newton are Psychometers, and capable of tracing and diagnosing by this means, we are not prepared to state; they are largely gifted with the healing influence, but we opine that they can utilise it to the greatest advantage and find ample scope for its employment in their immediate vicinity. There are healers in Victoria, the advertisement of one appears in our columns.—ED. *H. of Lt.*]

A SPIRITUALISTIC FUNERAL SERVICE.

A NOVEL and yet impressive burial service was performed on Thursday afternoon last, in the Southern Cemetery, Dunedin, over the remains of the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Braithwaite. When the coffin had been lowered into the grave, Mr. Braithwaite delivered the following address;—

"We have assembled on this spot, friends, to inter the body of our infant daughter in its natural home, to ultimately become component parts of mother earth. However much we wished to keep her here, we recognise only the loving-kindness of God in thus freeing, by the 'change called death,' the infantile spirit of our dear child from the sufferings it underwent, and that by His wise, beneficent, and unerring laws, the freed spirit has entered upon a state of progressive existence suitable to its new condition of life, to be tended and cared for by earnest and willing friends gone before. We are at this time impressed with the sublime and deeply suggestive words attributed to Jesus Christ—'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Mr. Braithwaite then read with much feeling and expression the following beautiful lines by John Pierpoint, the well known American poet:—

I know her fair face is hid,
Under the coffin lid;
Closed are her eyes, cold is her forehead fair;
My hand that marble felt,
O'er it in prayer I knelt;
Yet my heart whispers that *she* is not there.

Not there! where then is *she?*
The form I used to see
Was but the raiment that she used to wear;
The grave that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but her wardrobe lock'd—*she* is not there.

She lives! in all the past
She lives! nor to the last,
Of seeing her again, will I despair;
In dreams I see her now,
And on her angel brow
I see it written—"Thou shalt see me there."

Yes, we all live to God;
Father, thy chastening rod,
So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,
That in the Spirit Land,
Meeting at Thy right hand,
'Twill be our heaven to find that she is there.

The speaker then concluded as follows:—

"We now visibly consign her body to the earth, 'dust to dust,' and resign her spirit with confidence to the mercy, justice, and immutable laws of the Great Father of us all. Farewell! Invisibly her spirit will be ever present.—*Saturday Advertiser*, Dunedin.

TRUTH *VERSUS* ERROR.

BY A. TIMBRELL.

Words are like things; and a small drop of ink
Falling, like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.
ANON.

VOLTAIRE once said to FREDERICK THE GREAT, "It is hard to argue with a man of many legions," a remark that was both censorious and truthful. The present age, however, is gradually becoming tolerant of Freethought, and liberty of conscience is now conceded by the laws of England, as the birthright of British subjects, at all events under the British flag. In 1828, the first Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister, and at an early period of his new and remarkable career, for rarely united are the qualities of the warrior and the statesman, he repealed the Test and Corporation Acts, which were impediments to religious freedom; and, on February 5th, 1829, a further assertion of the claims of justice appeared, in its being declared in the King's speech that the time was come for the entrance of Roman Catholics into the British legislature, and in the speedy passing of a bill for their relief. But, notwithstanding this concession to our Roman Catholic fellow subjects, there succeeded the date of their emancipation an acrimonious hostility from other denominational sources, and the Protestant churches, originating with Henry the Eighth, about the year 1530, and by law established, manifested their malignity by vigorous opposition, and undisguised contumely. After the premature death of Edward the Sixth, 1553, in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign, Lady Jane Grey assumed the crown of England for ten days, and was beheaded by her successful rival, Queen Mary, who, in attempting the destruction of Protestantism, and the restoration of Popery, caused several hundreds of the so-called heretics to perish in the flames. Upon her death in 1558, Elizabeth became Queen of England, when a change occurred from bigoted Popery to a system of Protestanism, scarcely less bigoted; and, during her reign, the Huguenots in France suffered cruelly, while on St. Bartholomew's Eve, 1572, a dreadful carnage took place in Paris, when five hundred Protestants of rank, and ten thousand of inferior order, were slain in one night by the maddened people. The Tudor line of the British sovereigns terminated with the death of Elizabeth, on March 31st, 1603, when the unfortunate House of Stuarts succeeded to the throne. James the First of England, but Sixth of Scotland, avowed at a Conference held at Hampton Court, his attachment to Episcopacy, and, shortly afterwards, Percy and Catesby, two Catholic gentlemen, concerted the gunpowder plot. All this originated in the fanaticism of an impure theology; and crimes of the blackest magnitude have been perpetrated in the dishonored name of religion. At this day, a similar spirit is observable. It is only within the last few months that the Swedenborgians at Vienna were prohibited from worshipping God according to conscience; and, it was not until the English members of that denomination threatened to represent their grievance to Lord Salisbury, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that the Austrian police withdrew their interdict. It was only recently that the Law Officers of the Crown in Victoria prohibited the Spiritualists from charging for admission to public lectures delivered under their auspices in Melbourne, and sectarian bitterness continues to pervade the denominational churches with a malignity strangely in contrast with their religious professions. Although the church has been divorced from the State, there still exists, among all the sects, a latent disposition, if not an avowed desire, for temporalities and influence. This is not as it should be; for, pure religion and undefiled before God and man, is essentially spiritual in its principles and aspirations. The best religion is that which discards outward and pompous ceremonies, and inclines society to a more practical recognition of the proprieties of life. A mere *professional* system must be odious to our God, and of no avail to our humanity. It is strange that the orthodox party should ridicule and denounce the teachings of Spiritualism, when they admit that God is a *spirit*, that their Bible is *spiritually* inspired, and that the *spirit* is willing, but the flesh is weak. Their inconsistency and prejudice are equally transparent, for, while they preach the doctrine of repentance for sin, they are so uncharitable as to consign to eternal torment the soul of a transgressor who travels along the journey of life with a mind impressed with an opinion, or a belief, at variance with their irrational dogmas. The religious intolerance of the sixteenth century would be as cruel and persecuting *now as formerly*, if the Cardinals of Rome, the Prelates of England, the colonial bishops, and dignitaries of foreign churches, could only have their own way. I abhor pedantry, and would not wish for a moment that my object in the compilation of these articles should be misconstrued, but I ask the reader to excuse me while I pause to introduce, what I conceive to be, an appropriate quotation from one of G. P. R. JAMES' works:—"Recollect," said Father Willand to Marechal de Brissac, there are many sorts of right in this world. What is right for the lion is not right for the lamb. You do not put a bottle of Avignon claret into an earthen pitcher. What suits Brissac will not suit Cœur-de-Leon; so don't make up your mind, as most men do, to think everybody in the wrong that is not pleased with what pleases you. I commend the sentiment of that passage to the reverend minister of Christ's Gospel, who, on October 8th, 1870, had the ecclesiastical impertinence to say to me, "there is nothing like chipping the stone to make it fit its place in the building," and when I modestly remarked that it was quite possible to chip away at a stone until it was chipped all to pieces, the Ancient exclaimed sententiously, "Not if he is a wise chiseler!" I wish I could discover the "wise chiseler." All the harm I wish him is, that if ever some mischievous spirits get into his kitchen, they may run off with his gridiron and slippers. But, as Voltaire once said to Frederick the Great, "It is hard to argue with a man of many legions." Fanaticism will cause its votaries to act like lunatics. The Hon. ROBERT CURZON, in his work upon the monasteries of the Levant, describes a monk in the convent of Simopetra, on Mount Athos, who could not remember his mother, and never saw a woman in his life! Happy man! Probably, he coincided with Joe Carter's opinion, that the world would get on better without any women in it at all! Some people might consider the recluse to be a fanatic, but he believed he was right, and so I will leave him where he was found. Spiritualism, however, teaches differently. It does not require that its disciples should immure themselves in caves and cells, but on the contrary, it impels them to go abroad among mankind, and to do whatever good they can; or if incapable of doing any good, it counsels us not to do any harm. If Mr. CURZON's monk was superstitious, Joe Carter was an ass; unless it be possible as PARACELSUS declared it was, to create a race of human beings out of chemistry. I leave that an open question to be discussed by the Social Science Congress, which is appointed to sit when our International Exhibition is opened. On August 30th, 1879, a lady asked me if I had ever had any communications from the spirits of departed friends, and I replied that I believed I had been mysteriously influenced by some invisible and irresistible Presence, although I am unable to recognise the identity. Now, I have read some of Swedenborg's writings, and, if I remember correctly, he describes spirit-communion as coming through the medium of Thought; and, he also informs his readers that, in the Future Life, we shall have our minds and principles, our passions and propensities, revealed by our aspects and appearances. In earth life, unfortunately for the dearest interests of society, we are all liable to be deceived by hypercritical pretensions, and plausible exteriors; thus practically confirming the poet's description of the shrew, as pourtrayed by

. . . . "An artist, skill'd to trace
A demon's person with an angel's face."

And I recollect a very beautiful medium, when under control, at a Circle-meeting in Melbourne, on November 20th, 1879, saying, "Here they do not communicate in words; they speak by thought," and I instantly recognised in that assertion a corroboration of Swedenborg's revelation. When I told my lady friend on

August 30th, 1879, that I believed I had been mysteriously impressed by some occult and potent influence, I was simply telling the truth; for I solemnly confess that latterly my mind has become imbued with —what shall I term them—reflections? Where is the man, or woman either, who is in any way acquainted with my previous career, and would ever think me capable of reflection at all? What is the cause of this extraordinary change? I walk about the room—sometimes on a little footpath in front of my residence—thinking upon different things, when suddenly, like an electric flash, an idea—an embryo thought, so to speak, —drives me to my writing desk, and pulling paper towards me, I seize a pen, and begin to note down my impressions! Who ever knew me to do such a thing as that before? I acknowledge that, during my eventful life, I have written much for the public press; but, then, my compositions were merely professional, and sometimes irksome but compulsory; whereas now, the *afflatus* is intermittent and irrepressible, and *takes a direction totally at variance with previous impulses.* In former years I was paid for writing, so had a personal object to gratify; whereas now, my contributions are voluntary and gratuitous, and, at the same time irrepressible. I sit down to write under the instantaneous impulse of what I feel to be good and pure impressions; suddenly, and with an electrical velocity, I feel my thoughts travel away from the pure, and glide into an opposite channel. I strive to repel the influx, and the very effort of resistance restores—what?—The spiritual equilibrium? I hope so. But it is a desperate struggle. Remember that I am nearly fifty-nine years of age, and yet, am scarcely more than twelvemonths a convert—I dare not say, to Spiritualism, but certainly from Orthodoxy. I was never very remarkable for religious impressions, although I was baptised in what is known as the Church of England, was "confirmed" by the Bishop of London, in 1838, previous to my embarkation for India in the September of that year, have occasionally attended to the ordinances, and joined in the responses; but, it seemed to me that, notwithstanding all, I gradually grew worse, instead of better. The fact is, I became sensible of a *vacuum* somewhere. I wanted something that the church appeared unable to bestow. I became dissatisfied, because the ministers attempted "to cram words into mine ears against the stomach of my sense," and, for the life of me, I could not believe one half of what they preached. TERTULLIAN was credulous enough to believe in impossibilities, but I can't. My incredulity may arise from obtuseness, I cannot help it; and, if you are disposed to ridicule this revelation or confession, or whatever else you like to call it, then I should like to know who made you a judge over Israel? Mind your own business, and leave me to look after my *ultimate.* It was said of BYRON, that he preferred being considered a determined libertine, rather than assume an equivocal character of sanctity. He abhorred dissimulation and hypocrisy. Now, what are termed religious professions go for nothing. Conduct is the crucial test. As to principles, a man may deceive society, but he cannot deceive himself, and he alone, is responsible for his own Future. You may be a Catholic or a Protestant, a Mahometan or a Materialist—it has nothing to do with me. You are as much entitled to your opinion as I am to mine. Let me finish what I have to say. Although, up to the present time, I have not been an eye-witness of spiritual manifestations, such as have occurred within the experiences of Mr. Home, and Dr. Slade, I am not disposed to discredit the possibility of such phenomena. A great deal depends upon the mediumistic powers of the operator, and much upon the surrounding conditions. But, believing as I do believe, that Thought is a magnetic tractor, I am persuaded, from my interior and intuitive impressions that we are all susceptible, in a greater and modified degree, of spiritualistic influences. Affinity and Disposition have much to do with this. But, the moment that there arises a detestation of evil, and a yearning after what is good, the spirit begins to emerge from bondage to freedom, and from darkness into light. Spirit communion is as old as the creation; and, to myself, it is an unspeakable consolation, that my departed friends, though out of sight are not far off; nay, there are times when I imagine they are close to me, but so shadowy, transparent, and immaterial, as to be almost imperceptible. I have read in Roman history that the spirit of the murdered Cæsar visited the patriotic Brutus in his tent, and told him it would see him again at Philippi. I have read in the poet's lines that—

> . . . . . The buried prophet
> Answered to the hag of Endor,
> And that the Spartan monarch
> Drew, from the Byzantine maid's
> Unsleeping spirit, her answer,
> And his destiny.

I find recorded in the pages of the Bible numerous instances of supernatural intervention, and several cases of direct spirit communication; and, it appears to me a singular inconsistency on the part of the Denominational priesthood, that, although they profess to believe the Bible, they yet affect to ignore Spiritualism. All spirits are not mediumistic, so I am told, all events, and all people are not equally receptive. But what of that? Our *ultimate* depends, not upon what we *see or hear*, but upon how we *think and act*, and while I claim for myself the prerogative of Freethought, I concede the same privilege to my neighbour. Conscience is our Monitor, although Colonel Levison Rich told his nephew that he had "never heard of such a thing!" My opinion is that our God is a God of Love, and not of malignity. I believe that he has created us all free agents, and endowed us with reason to guide us to a choice between good and evil. The trespass in the Garden of Eden is a beautiful allegory; for it indicates a retribution for transgression, while it likewise holds out a promise of future beatitude for the repentant offender as well as the strictest Puritan.

SO-CALLED SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE *Rochester Union* is puzzled by the claims of "Spirit Photography." It says:—"It may not be generally known that for the past two years spirit photographs have been taken in this city, some of them being certainly extraordinary productions. The power granted by the inhabitants of the unseen world to reproduce their features on a camera is not given to every one, and in this section, so far, Miss Hedley, who runs a photograph gallery on State-street, has a monopoly of what is likely to turn out a most lucrative business. Hearing of Miss Hedley's gift in this line, a citizen, being of a curious turn of mind, determined to see what there was of it. Visiting the gallery, he told the proprietress that he understood she took spirit photographs, and he wished to test her skill.

'I am not certain I can succeed,' was Miss Hedley's response; 'but we can try.'

'Would you allow me to pass my handkerchief over the glass before you prepare it for the camera?'

'Oh, certainly, as many times as you wish.'

The visitor carefully rubbed the glass on both sides, after which he stood while the collodion was put on, and when the glass was put in the camera he took his seat. The cap of the instrument was removed, and in a few minutes the picture was taken. On the negative being taken out and held up to the light, some faint forms were visible.

'What are those marks on the glass?' asked the citizen.

'Those are faces of some persons you will no doubt recognise when printed plain.'

'Well, when can I obtain a proof of the picture?

'Oh, by to-morrow.'

'No; I intend to have a proof while I wait, as I do not intend there shall be any humbug in this matter.'

After waiting about two hours the proof was taken, toned, and placed on a card. It was then that he recognised in the most distinct manner the faces of his sister and child, who had died some time previous. Not wishing to be made the victim of an optical delusion, he put the card in his pocket, and on going home, showed it to his wife, without saying a word. She immediately recognised the faces on the print, and her husband then told her how it was taken. It was shown to friends of the family, who recognised them.—*Photographic News.*

DR. HUGHES' TEMPERANCE HALL LECTURES.

Dr. Hughes commenced a series of lectures at the Temperance Hall, on Sunday, February 8th, and met with a good reception. His discourse on the 15th, entitled, "Looking Beyond," was one of the finest he has given in Melbourne. The following is a brief synopsis of his theme:—All nature he said speaks of God, particularly those operations and effects in which man had no hand; leaving the crowded cities, and entering the sylvan glades, man drew near the Creator through his works. The earth was on the eve of a great change; the truth was spreading, not only among Spiritualists and Freethinkers, but in the churches, and men were "looking beyond." In support of this he quoted authorities in the Anglican Church, whose views were beyond their creeds. The question of the age he said was not, is there a God? but is the Bible God, or Nature's God the true one?

An English Bishop has ascertained by enquiry, that ninety-nine per cent. of scientific men discredited the orthodox scheme of religion. Man had a want, a desire for immortality; nature responded to that want, and gave promise of its fulfilment. Love, he said, was the only power to raise man. An Universal religion must be eclectic. Step by step, looking beyond towards the goal, man must work out his own salvation. He criticised the irrational idea of man leaping at one bound from the ordinary earthly condition to the angelic. There was no death but transition, and the translated spirit, met by its friends on the other side, was helped by their sympathy to higher conditions. He dilated on the comforting doctrine of Spiritualism, and the superiority of knowledge over faith, concluding with an appropriate poem.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

The fourth anniversary of the Theosophical Society was held at Bombay, on the 29th November, and is reported by the *Allahabad Pioneer* as follows:—The Theosophists held high carnival last evening at their Girgaum headquarters. Several hundreds of the most influential natives of the city—bankers, merchants, mill-owners, pandits, pleaders, &c.—crowded their compound, and attentively watched the proceedings. The occasion for the gathering was to celebrate the Theosophical Society's fourth anniversary, the opening of its new library, and the foundation of the *Theosophist*. Gorgeous cards, artistically printed in gold and black—both design and execution very creditable to the Society—had bidden the guests to the meeting; there was a profusion of lamps, Chinese lanterns and flags, a great arch of gas jets, on which the word "Welcome" appeared in letters of fire, and a seven-pointed star blazed above its crown, high in the air. From a concealed place not far away came the musical strains of a military band of twenty pieces. The whole compound was carpeted and filled with chairs, the front row being reserved for the more important personages. The verandah of the library bungalow served as a sort of private box of the speakers of the evening and gentlemen accompanied by their wives. A more motley audience could scarcely be imagined, so varied the races, complexions and costumes. The Parsee and Brahmin, the Jain and Mussulman, the Christian and Heathen side by side, and Vishnavite and Sivaite observing for the time a benevolent neutrality. The scene was, in short, a picturesque and interesting one, and indicated that the busy Theosophists have already created a wide interest in their doings.

The evening's programme embraced the three features of addresses, a display of working models of machinery by native mechanics, and an exhibition of native industrial products in the library hall. The speakers were Colonel H. S. Olcott, President of the Society; Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hurri Deshmuk, late Joint Judge at Poona; Mr. Nowrozjl Furdoonji, Municipal Councillor of Bombay; Kashinath Trimbuk Telang, M.A., L.L.B., the Orientalist; and Shantaram Nayaren, Esq., Pleader. A fine poem in Guzerati, written for the occasion, was read by the author, who is known more widely as "The Guzerati Poet" than under his own name. Colonel Olcott's address was an eloquent review of the Society's work before and since the arrival of his party in India, and was received with great applause. He disclosed the important fact that the plan of the Society embraced good honest work for the improvement of the material condition of his adopted countrymen, the Hindus, quite as distinctly as Oriental research and the revival of Aryan mystical science. They had not only founded a journal to serve as an organ for the dissemination of the fruits of Hindu scholarship, but also a workshop with machines of various kinds, in which to manufacture Indian goods for export. The invitation card of the evening, whose equal could not be turned out from any existing lithographic press of Bombay, Calcutta or Madras, had to a large degree been printed by a young Parsee, taught by his colleague, Mr. Edward Wimbridge, within the past six weeks. Adopting, as he—Colonel Olcott had—India as his country and her people as his people, it was his sacred duty to do all that lay within his power to promote the physical welfare of the teeming millions of this peninsula, no less than to humbly second the efforts of that great Aryan of our times, Swámi Dyánund Saraswati, for the revival of Vedic monotheism and the study of Yoga. The address will be printed.

Colonel Olcott (the President) gave a sketch of the rise and progress of the Society, and defined its objects, which, besides the study of Psychology, and the revival of Aryan religion, included the study of Sanscrit; he also announced the intention of the Society to commence a course of weekly lectures on Mesmerism, and other branches of occult science.

FREEDOM OF MIND.

In no age recorded in the pages of history were our credenda subject to such severe criticism as in the present. From the time when religion freed from mysterious oracles first made its appearance, a sceptical element has prevailed and pervaded its atmosphere to keep as it were in check the tendency to subvert the reasoning faculty as having no part in its economy. 'Tis true, that if revelation supply the place of reason, the function of reason is at once displaced by the superior tone of revelation; but when the severe analysis to which revelation is subject, reveals chaos where we had expected order, it is a sure sign that revelation is in a sense defective, and thus reason must assume her office and guide the spiritual or intellectual nature of man to the altitude designed by a superior power. The mind is reflex; all the subtle elements that constitute its surroundings are imbibed, and made to suit its requirements. Step by step back has the mind gone; step by step forward, gathering the experiences of the past, winnowing the chaff from the wheat, and by its application to existing needs has produced some most wonderful results, which are destined to achieve higher and yet higher ones. The philosophy of mind has endowed man with wonderful power and energy. It has built cities; it has subjected nature; it has subverted antagonistic forces; it has idealized, and the reality has assumed its shape; and now it is applying its force to the moral nature of man to find out as it were the sympathy existing in his composition with the religious element. To subvert reason in this searching analysis is destructive to the first law of man's being, "Choose ye between the evil and the good." It is undeniable that the moral nature of man opens up to the influence of religious elements, but the channels through which these elements have flown have become corrupted by the enervating influences of the arrogant and unphilosophic, who, by the credentials of mystery, have assumed the exclusive right to dispense the Alpha and Omega of spiritual laws and being. Themselves ignorant thereof, and unsuited to the task, have corrupted and emasculated the transcendant essences of True Religion. Man finding this out for himself will assume the office of his own priest, till the pure stream is no longer polluted. Hence the mind must act by the pure process of thought till this state is reached, and man freed from cares and troubles that tend to enervate his beings, will calmly review the surrounding scene, and as calmly await his

transition to the higher plane. Till this desirable end is attained, he must assiduously attend to the progress of his mind; must war against the corrupting influences of his own nature in connexion with the process, and carefully guard against the prostitution of reason.

The highest attitude to which the mind has reached is surpassing in its grandeur; it overwhelms us with its force, and man is its possessor; how marvellous that he has so blinded his spiritual nature as to obscure his power to perceive its tendency. The potent power enveloped in it tending to immortalize his own being. Gifted with pure reason which has placed him so infinitely above the brute (which often surpasses him in physical power), but which is his passport to the higher planes. Leaving all nature, which for the time has served his purpose behind, to ascend its native hills, breathe the atmosphere of freedom, penetrate the deep wells of wisdom, measure and guage the attributes of Deity, and combine to minister to his own deification. What a glorious position does the mind occupy! And yet to meet our sordid ends we play the harlot with it. But retribution is at hand to punish with due severity all such. Beware lest we fall among the number.

Yesterday has come and gone with all its experiences and lessons; taught us how to act in futurity; sunk into oblivion; all its mistakes buried with it, but indelibly marked on the memory of Time. The mind of yesterday has ascended, embodied in the physical, it has learnt nature's lessons. It is from its sphere drinking deep of the eternal spring of wisdom. It moves, it acts, it descends in dove-like attitude to teach its lessons, and tell its experiences. The affinity of the physical attracts it still to earth. It descends and rests on the aspiring soul. Touch the perennial springs, and there flows the inspiring stream which uplifts struggling humanity, encased within the earthly cerement. The recipient unfolding his nature to its balmy influences speaks its thoughts and recites its experiences, but the worldly and unthinking cry crucify him! Not so, the spiritual nature. Divest it of its unnatural garb, and the aggregate mind opens itself to the influences of the higher planes, and relegating its fanaticisms, its bigotry, its usurpations, and its intolerance adopts the universal creed, God our Father, and man our brother; and drinking deep of the wells which the mind enfolds frees itself from the thraldom of superstition; mounting on eagles' wings surveys the universe, and returning adapts all phenomena to the requirements of the times, with the manifesto, "Stop not here, but advance higher and still higher." For the mind knows no stationary state, but revolving and revolving around, nature's plan sees there its plane, its haven and itself.

EMMA.

WHAT IS OUR NATURE?

Dr. William Hitchman, M.R.C.S., lectured the other evening on the above subject in Woolton Mechanics' Institution, owing to the temporary absence of Mr. Robert Gladstone, J.P., whose place he kindly filled on the occasion. The doctor gave a scientific and religious outline of human nature, contending that the spiritual evolution of man's future body as a clothing for his present soul was as truly demonstrated by science and religion as the protoplasm, or first visible particle of our physical constitution, and that God still acts through "ministering spirits," alike in natural phenomena and in the events of daily life. The cherubic symbols, he said, placed in the tabernacle now may be faithful hieroglyphics of the good man's angelic nature, as when surmounted by a blaze of glory in the Hebrew church of the wilderness. Atheists, Positivists, and Secularists, whose noise and smoke affect the purblind, are doctors for the healthy only, and not for the sorrows of the soul, or the aspirations of the loving heart, and the spiritually "sick unto death" throughout the world. Willing or unwilling, people must believe in "the things of the spirit," so long as they cannot measure a bushel of thoughts, a peck of ideas, or a yard of feeling, and roll out bundles of emotions, demonstrate the chemistry of suffering, the physics of joy, and bring to mortal view all the elements and forces of the unseen universe. No spiritual Christlike kingdom will ever be established or maintained by such pagan influences as might against right, or the secular sword despotically wielded by sovereign power and selfish policy. Religion must prove true to itself by doing good to all men. Mr. James Thornley, of Water-street, presided, and in moving a cordial vote of thanks to the learned doctor for his eloquent and beautiful oration, said that it deserved to be classed amongst the best expositions of human nature yet published on the side of universal science and religion. A similar compliment was paid to the chairman, and the interesting proceedings terminated by a warm acclamation of approval from the whole audience.—*Liverpool Mercury*, Dec. 3rd, 1879.

JOTTINGS ON PASSING EVENTS.

The Rev. F. Haydn Williams, an English minister belonging to the Independent connection, must be a bold man. From a London journal I learn that at a late meeting of the Congregational Union, Mr. Williams, in referring to the hard-handed and dirty-faced sons of toil who daily throng out of the gates of Woolwich Arsenal, made the following statement:—"The men said, what do you expect us to believe? You bring us the Bible; what are we to believe of it? Do you expect us to believe that people used to live seven, eight, or nine hundred years? He would say to such men, you may read that statement with a grain of salt. If the men asked, do you think there were giants in those days; that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and thus arose a race of tremendous heroes? he would reply, that is simply heroic poetry; you are to read that as mythical and legendary. If he were asked, do you believe that the sun stood still at the command of Joshua, while he slaughtered his enemies? he could only say he should be sorry to believe it. But was it not written in the Book of Jasher? Well, who wrote the Book of Jasher, and where was it to be got? If it could be found it would be seen that it was simply a piece of heroic poetry. He supposed that there were very few who would believe, even if it were written in *forty* Books of Jasher, such an egregious and atrocious statement as that! Then, with regard to the Song of Solomon, which was said to represent the love of Christ for His Church ——

At this point, says my authority, the chairman rose to order. It is not stated *what* the chairman ordered, but it is to be hoped that *iced-water* suggested itself to him as being the nectar best suited to allay the perturbations, mental, spiritual, or otherwise, of himself and *confrères*.

There are ministers in the Victorian Church whose scepticism on many points of Biblical "history" is quite as emphatic as that of the Rev. F. Haydn Williams; but if they are not so outspoken as he, it is because they have suffered their boldness to be tempered by discretion. Men like Bishop Moorhouse — and his liberality by no means exceeds that of some of his clerical brethren—are doing better work for the dissemination of genuine Freethought than they could possibly accomplish were they to quit the church. The spread of religious liberalism must be gradual. Growth of any description, to be healthy and effectual, needs to be natural. *Process* is everywhere essential to true development; the student does not at one stride become the scholar, nor does the mortal instantaneously grow into the angel—"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Some of our iconoclasts need reminding of this, and to such I would further commend the following sentiment from the eminent Head Master of the City of London School: "All widely prevalent illusions contain some truth, and to reveal the inclosed truth is generally the best way to dissipate the inclosing illusion.*"

A chronicle of "Passing Events" would be very incomplete without some reference to the approaching departure—if that isn't a contradiction in terms, I don't know what is—of the Rev. Thomas Jones, of Col-

* "Oxford Sermons." By the Rev. E. A. Abbott, A.M., D.D.

lins-street Independent Church; for Mr. Jones, if not an event, is a *phenomenon*, and like the celestial stranger who has lately been puzzling the learned folk at our Observatory, has a good deal of the comet—or comic, if you prefer that orthography—about him. His departure, as in the case of the sky-moth, is a matter no less of public notoriety than of public concern, and I too cannot help feeling sorry, though personally no great admirer of the rev. gentleman, that he is going to leave us; for Mr. Jones, despite his faults, was a liberal-minded man, who set conscience before creed, duty before dogma, and before proclaiming the value of intellectual propositions of belief, preferred to preach "the beauty of holiness."

The Sydney liberals have set us a good example in their public recognition of Francis William Newman's veteran offices in the cause of Freethought. After the many undeserved testimonials so readily accorded to men for the most indifferent services, this endeavour on the part of our neighbours to show their appreciation of a true worker is as refreshing as a good wholesome thunderstorm after the miserable attempts of our Corporation *employés* to lay the dust in this city. The simile is perhaps weak—certainly it is a watery one—but is familiar, at least to my Melbourne readers. The testimonial has taken the form of a handsome silver inkstand—an appropriate emblem of the field wherein the recipient's great achievements have been wrought.

I thought of writing a brief sketch of Professor Newman's life and work, but as I don't want to cause any variation in my editor's customary serenity by consuming more of his space, you are politely referred to some good dictionary of biography, where you will find a notice of the distinguished scholar, thinker, and author—now in his seventy-fifth year.

MELBOURNE PROGRESSIVE LYCEUM.

The Nomination of Officers for the ensuing six months took place last Sunday, when the following officers were elected:—

Conductor—Mr. W. H. Terry.
Guardians—Messrs. Daws, Cackett, and Vevers.
Teasurer—Mr. H. Moore.
Secretary—Mr. Cherry.
Watchman—Mr. P. Joske.
Librarian—Miss Haselden.
Musical Cenductor—L. Weichardt.
Editor "Lyceum Miniature"—Miss Brotherton.
Business Manager "do."—Mr. Van Alkemade.

Leaders—Messrs. Deakin, Joske, Lees, Hooglimmer, McLoughlin, Lumley, Cook, Veevers, and Parrant; Mesdames Moore and Wilson.

There were two nominations for the Vice-Conductorship, viz., Mr. Lumley and Mr. E. Joske, and a ballot was appointed for Sunday, February 29th.

THE MAGNETIC SLEEP.

It is deemed incredible that people in magnetic sleep can describe objects at a distance, and scenes which they never looked upon while waking; yet nobody doubts the common form of somnambulism, called sleep-walking. You may singe the eye-lashes of a sleep-walker with a candle, and he will perceive neither you nor the light. His eyes have no expression; they are like those of a corpse. Yet he will walk out in the dense darkness, avoiding chairs, tables, and all other obstructions; he will tread the ridge-pole of a roof, far more securely than he could in a natural state, at midday; he will harness horses, pack wood, make shoes, etc., all in the darkness of midnight. Can you tell me with what eyes he sees to do these things? and what light directs him? If you cannot, be humble enough to acknowledge that God governs the universe by many laws incomprehensible to you; and be wise enough to conclude that these phenomena are not deviations from the divine order of things, but occasional manifestations of principles always at work in the great scale of being, made visible at times, by causes as yet unrevealed.—*Voice of Angels.*

ARE ALL HUMAN SOULS IMMORTAL?

AN OPEN LETTER TO HUDSON TUTTLE.

Hudson Tuttle, Esq.—*My Dear Brother,*—You may have noticed my letter some time ago in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, entitled, "Are all human souls immortal?" in which I take the negative. J. B. Crocker replied to me, and in a late journal I presented him a few questions to answer. It is an important subject, and as it seems to me the first to be determined in reducing Spiritualism to a science, because upon this conclusion hinges almost everything else in connection with the great subject. It seems to me that continued individuality must, in the after-life, depend upon obedience to law. We must infer this from what we know of the operation of God's laws in this life. We know that to come in conflict with the laws governing our physical body, and if this opposition is persistently continued, it will produce death. Ignorance or want of sufficient intelligence to conform to the laws, produces the same effect as wilful violation.

Supposing that the laws governing our spiritual natures operate similar to those governing the physical, we must naturally infer that the spiritual part of all forms of life may be by those laws disintegrated. The object of God's laws are to enforce obedience, and if a spirit of an animal has not the intelligence to obey, and the spirit of a man wilfully disobey, will not the law eventually destroy such spirits? Right here comes in the vital point. If obedience to law alone confers immortality, then all spirits of animal and vegetable life, if left without the fostering care of a superior intelligence, will become disintegrated through ignorance of the law, and wilful disobedient human spirits will destroy their individuality through disobedience of law.

If the position I have taken is the correct one, it is the all-important fact to know, and of necessity becomes the corner-stone upon which the great spiritual science will be builded.

The sentimental notion that all the disobedient, wandering, lying, deceitful "diakka" of the other world are finally to be redeemed, I do not believe, since they have no aspiration for anything that is good, but glory in wickedness and persistent violation of law must inevitably ultimate in annihilation. If this is a truth, it is an all-important truth to know, since it would exercise a wholesome influence upon us in this life.

I write you these thoughts, and request that you give your own convictions upon the subject, through the Journal.

Your brother, searching for truth,
J. Murray Case.

Columbus, O.

REPLY BY HUDSON TUTTLE.

The question propounded by Bro. Case is by no means a new one to me, for years ago it was a subject of my deepest impressional investigation. The dying animal and the dying human being were both presented to my clairvoyant vision, and I saw in both the same processes occur in the illumination of their spiritual beings. That of the animal floated above the dead body like a thin cloud, and while I was expecting it to take form and identity, it dissolved, and disappeared just as a cloud would do in a summer sky. The spirit of the human being arose like a cloud in the same manner, took form and identity, and became a counterpart of the body it had left. Then I learned that between these extremes were all degrees, and that even individual existence after the death of the body by no means proved immortality; only continuity of existence. This view briefly expressed as it was, called out many sharp criticisms, and was presented in a distorted form. As a seeming contradiction to other impressions I had published, and as I regarded it as in a degree speculative and of little practical value at that stage of Spiritualism, I did not enter into its lengthy discussion.

So early as 1864, I published in the second volume of "Arcana of Nature," the following impressional paragraph on this subject: "Animals as well as man have spirits, but they are not immortal, for even in such

ultimated elements harmony cannot be maintained after death of the body. To illustrate this idea, an arch may be built never so perfectly, but if the keystone is not put in place the whole will fall into ruins as soon as the staging is removed; but lay that single stone in place and the whole stands firm as a rock. So with the spirit of the animal; it is an imperfect arch, which so soon as the body which supports it is removed, falls. But the spirit of man is a perfect arch, standing firm after the removal of the body. But as the animal merges through intermediate forms into man, and the infant knows less than the perfect animal, the line of demarcation before alluded to apparently is drawn with difficulty. Not so, however; a certain dgree of refinement is absolutely essential, below which is nonentity, above which is immortality—not sharply drawn, however. A spirit is not necessarily immortal, but can be gradually extinguished, as a lamp burning for an indefinite time and then going out. Such is the condition of the lowest races of mankind. Their spirits exist after death, but in them is no progress, no desire for the immortal state, and slowly, atom by atom, they are absorbed into the bosom of the universal spirit essence, as the spirit of the animal is immediately after death. It may be asked at what age does man become immortal? No certain time can be given, as no sharp line exists; the time varies according to the infant's development. The idiot—is he immortal? This is an inaccurate question, for the answer depends on circumstances of degree and cause of idiocy. If destitute of a ray of intellect, a voiceless, thoughtless idiot, the inference is not cheering; for if existence be preserved after death, it will probably be absorbed in a short time, as the Hindoo would say, "into the bosom of Brahm."

Men like Dr. Peebles, who set out with the theory of pre-existence of spirits, of course are driven to the conclusion that every embryotic life is immortal, and the lowest and most idiotic of human beings have this birthright. The spirit is in its nature the same, they believe, and its manifestations are impeded by the flesh. Those who regard pre-existence as only a theory, opposed to the received doctrine of creation by law, against which it brings the unreceivable necessity of miracle in the advent of every human being, regard immortality as the product of a progressive development. "Man is the greatest fact of the universe, and spirit is the greatest fact of man." As there can be no line drawn between the mortal and immortal, no more than between a hill and valley. We know both exist, but where does the valley leave off and the hill begin? On this wavering line spiritual existence may be limited by an hour, a year, a thousand years, and yet expire.

Mr. Case has made an interesting presentation of the subject, yet I think he errs in the causes he assigns for the entity short of spiritual existence. He places it on moral grounds. With him the moral character, desires, and aspirations individualise the spirit. Rather, as an outgrowth or development, as an entirety, is it not dependent? The human being, after a certain stage of mental growth, cannot annul its charter to immortal life, and must accept it with all its infinite consequences and responsibilities.

Such are the teachings I have received from my spirit guides, and being in accordance with science and the most plausible theory of creation, I have accepted them, not as a finality, for there is none, but true as far as they go into the mystic realm.

Religio Philosophical Journal.

THE GOOD TIME COMING.

The world rests not with a careless ease
    On the wisdom of the past;
From Moses, and Plato, and Socrates,
    It is onward advancing fast;
And the words of Jesus, and John, and Paul,
    Stand out from the lettered page,
And the living present claims them all,
    In the spirit that moves the age.
Great, earnest souls, by the truth made free,
    No longer in blindness bow;
And the good time coming—the yet to be—
    Is embraced in the good time now.

HEALING BY LAYING ON OF HANDS—REMARKABLE INSTANCES OF ITS SUCCESS.

We have several times of late taken occasion to bear witness to the value of the gift of magnetic healing which is possessed by Dr. Webber, of 8½ Montgomery-place, Boston; and desire at present to adduce additional evidence in this direction—not for the purpose merely of augmenting the Doctor's remedial reputation, and therefore the extent of his practice, but for the broader purpose ef emphasising the fact that "healing by laying on of hands" *does* actually exist in the world to-day—and is efficaciously exercised by numerous ladies and gentlemen who have the power developed within their organisms—and that the instances we now put on record are potent reasons, among a multitude of others, as to why the utmost liberty of action in the field of medical practice should be allowed, and that no efforts should be made, either by the imposing of social or legislative restrictions or penalties, to deter either the free-thinkers in medicine or the angel-gifted clarvoyants, or healing mediums from ministering as they may desire—and be desired—to the suffering and health-seeking in the community wherever found:—

The first case of which we shall speak may be summed up, as to its details, as follows—The little son (aged seven years) of Mr. William Boyce, of 52 Rutland Square, Boston, while engaged in play had a fall, on a Tuesday evening recently, the result being a shock to the system which in effect paralysed and rendered totally inactive the abdominal intestines. Violent fever set in, and from Wednesday morning following the accident to ten o'clock on Saturday night of the week in which the trouble arose, the patient continued to grow worse—his symptoms increasing in their unpromising character till he became delirious; his pulse was at a hundred and forty, and he was apparently sinking under the pressure of his malady.

During all this time the little sufferer was closely and anxiously attended by a medical gentleman, who Mr. Boyce assured our reporter—who called upon him to obtain the facts in the case—was one of the most erudite and skilful physicians in Boston; but the patient experienced no perceptible relief from his prescriptions, and finally the stomach of the boy reached a state of sensitiveness wherein it refused to retain any remedy whatever. The physician decided that nothing could save the lad but the inducing of a state of perspiration; but found the line of procedure usually successful in his practice in producing this condition to fail utterly in the present instance.

It was then at the critical moment, when death seemed to stand by the bed of the little sufferer, that the father determined to avail himself of the services of Dr. Webber—of whose powers as a magnetic healer he had heard previous mention. At ten o'clock on the Saturday evening above referred to he sent for Dr. Webber, and in five minutes following the first treatment by him—by laying on of hands—the boy began to show signs of the needed condition of perspiration which the attendant physician had declared all-important, and which no known means existed in the then state of the patient of inducing. A marked improvement was soon apparent in his case, and after a few visits paid subsequently by Dr. Webber, the boy was able to be about again; and is reported by his father to be steadily regaining his strength and spirits. There is every reason to decide that the exercise of the magnetic gift possessed by Dr. Webber was the instrumentality which greatly assisted in saving the life of the afflicted lad.

The wonderful success attending his treatment of the boy caused the wife of Mr. Boyce to consider the feasibility of employing Dr. Webber's services in restoring a lameness in one of her feet which was at the time troubling her greatly. Some four weeks before the accident which befel her son, Mrs. Boyce had, as she supposed, sprained an ankle—the hurt proving to be of a more serious nature as time went on, and her efforts to obtain medical relief seeming to be fruitless of beneficial results—and at the time of her son's severe illness she, filled with maternal solicitude, had painfully

dragged herself about to minister to his wants as only a mother can do. Her lameness attracted the attention of Dr. Webber, who on being finally asked to treat the injured member, felt an answering certainty of impression that he could relieve it. After giving the first treatment he was informed by his medical spirit-guide that the trouble was really in the foot, a small bone in which had been forced from its place by the shock to which it had been subjected, and that during the next treatment he (the spirit) would find this bone, and cause the Doctor's hands to close in upon and re-set it in place. This promise the guides faithfully discharged the next time the patient was visited—she (without having been informed of what the spirit had said) quickly affirming that she experienced the sensation of something moving in her foot, much as if a displaced bone was sliding back into its proper position. Under the effective treatment of Dr. Webber this lady has been permanently relieved of what, under other circumstances, and without the aid of spirit-vision and the power of the impressional magnetic healer, would in all probability have become a permanent trouble.

These cases, as herein set forth, are supported by the endorsement of the principals and the witnesses of the cures as well (all resident in Boston), who can be consulted by anyone wishing to know at first-hand concerning them.—*Banner of Light.*

THE SPIRITUALISM OF THE BIBLE.

THE following is from Mr. Curtis's Spiritualism of the Bible identical with Modern Spiritualism:—

On the evening of September 5, 1879, I was discussing with a friend the *objective* and *subjective* phases in connection with the phenomena of Spiritualism, when the following message came in writing from my special spirit friend and guide:—

"Be not unwilling to accept any theory which carries with it the force of reason. But provided you set up theories for yourselves, they should be well examined, and reasoned well upon, prior to your adopting them. Do not dogmatise upon pet theories, whatever they may be. We do not come to force our convictions upon you. We have already told you that thought itself is material. Then, if thought is material, in what way do you think it impossible for us to handle that—to us, mind you—material something, and reproduce it upon glass, the wall, paper, or any other substance? You might as well affirm that shadow is not real but subjective; yet your photographers can use it, and cause the shadow reflected upon a sensitized plate to become objective and permanent. We have an impression that ultimately the many scientific minds we have in our great world will very shortly discover the laws regulating the action of thought so thoroughly that we will be able to give our own mediums, whom we use, a plan for the production of photographs of them. Should we succeed, will that be a subjective proof, or will it be an objective one, that thought is real? We have listened to your conversation; and as it interested some of the scientific intelligences who accompanied me, they have thought fit to say a few words on the subject. You, my friends, have all much to learn. We have much work to do prior to being able to convince all classes of minds of our being a power in the midst of society, who, though not present in an objective sense, have still individualities as strongly human and personal as any of you, even although we have laid aside the former garments of flesh, and covered ourselves with the more enduring garments of the spirit. You cannot tell what deep truths often lie hid in many idle sayings, or, as you would say, the extravagant fancies of overworked brains. Yet you must always reason well upon any information we may voluntarily give you. Do not permit any of our sayings to be accepted as true without pondering well upon them; and should you at any time adopt our ideas, do not dogmatise upon our words because we have said so and so, and because you have been led to our way of thinking. What may appear right to us to-day may appear wrong when we get more light. Truth is absolute when you have discovered it, but in mere *terms* it is difficult to discover what is truth. In your conversation we saw the two sides of it, and we viewed it from your standpoint and ours, and we must say truth lay on both sides. We have now said all upon this particular subject we should say at this time; and we hope that, in the future, with small matters, when a *term* only is in dispute, you will leave it alone. We have spoken this much in order to put your minds at rest with regard to objective and subjective phenomena viewed from our stand-point." [Then followed a long personal communication to me, which cannot be published.]

VISIONS IN THE WATER-GLASS.

By Adelma von Vay.

Mr. J. Lorimer, of Ballarat, kindly forwarded the following extract from a letter received by him from the Baroness von Vay:—

A NEW gift of mediumship developed itself in me during the autumn of 1867, viz., Visions in the Water-glass. Our spirit-guides advised me of it; they declared to me one day I had the gift of seeing spirits *without* being in a state of somnambulism. I was to take a glass filled with water and look into it, and I would see pictures in the fluid—spiritual representations would be shown to me. The very first time I saw a lot of different objects in the water-glass; the first I saw was a railway, a dog, then forms resembling the human; it seemed to me at first that the water was moving, then there appeared little clouds, small dots and small spots, then it seemed to me again as if the water formed waves, till all these things by degrees took form and developed themselves into different objects. I was, at the time in a perfectly normal state, *i. e.*, fully conscious of what I saw, and of what was spoken and done around me; and still I always seemed to be in sympathy with what I saw, in joy or pain, in sorrow or in mirth, in comfort or in discomfort, in bliss, in dislike, and anger. The appearance of higher and purer spirits gave me a feeling of happiness, whereas bad spirits, which would create aversion, made me angry. I even seemed to have the sense of smell, of cold, and warmth. Sometimes my eyes would be filled with tears, at other times I would laugh heartily over the pictures which I saw.

I had the impression as if the pictures seemed to follow each other slowly; as if one developed itself out of the other, the same as dissolving views. Sometimes they appeared a great deal bigger than the surface of the water-glass could have allowed. These representations appeared like photos; then again like brilliant light and shade pictures—light blue, yellow, golden, reddish, lilac, grey, etc., etc.; all these colours I saw.

The Baroness Von Vay's guides (Laurentius and Buddhu) gave the following explanation of these appearances:—

"The gift of vision or prophecy is as old as mankind itself; the latter shows itself amongst all nations, in all degrees of society; it is a universal gift which, however, until now has been little studied and explored, and only exceptionally exercised. Some see these spiritual pictures in vacuum, others on the wall, others in the fire, others in an empty or filled glass. In order to be able to see these spiritual things it is necessary that the human spirit allows itself to be concentrated upon some object, *i. e.*, it must firmly draw its attention to some object; brain and eye must not be wandering, but must be collected, quiet and fully conscious without somnambulism or ecstacy, for these again are quite different states; for these pictures we intend showing to the seeing medium we only require *a quiet eye, collection, and capability*. This capability lies in magnetic power; in the degree of warmth of the medium, and shows in the organs of thought and feeling; it is a capability which, like all other kinds of mediumship, has nothing to do with the *will* of the medium. The medium will not often be able to see all he would like, or what she would like, for here the will of the Spirit who prepares the pictures comes into action."

"Words and sentences come in gold, blue, black, green, red, or yellow letters," etc., etc.

COMMUNICATION.

My dear Friend,—I am now about to give you my ideas of the signs of the times. People are talking about the comet being the sign of evil things, the end of the world,—the world about to be burned up by the nearness of this comet, etc. There is no such intention on the part of the comet; it is a harmless messenger, sent to bring tidings of a change in the structure of Heavenly things; it tells of the change in the arrangements of human affairs, and renders the place through which it sweeps, clear and pure from evil. It is a sign of purification and improvement. Things are ever progressing, and the comets have their work to do among the heavenly bodies to renew their vitality and increase their strength. The earth needs her strength and vitality to be renewed and improved, and the comet has this effect upon the earth, which will show itself in the fresh impetus given to the magnetic influences of the earth. The magnetic influences of all the heavenly bodies, require to be improved and augmented. This is the comet's work, and when it has passed beyond the reach of the earth's attraction, the earth will be in a position to utilise the fresh magnetism she has thus absorbed into her system, and will be made more fit to undertake the struggle that is before her, both in her terrestrial atmosphere and the spiritual aura which is pouring upon her from the higher sphere of light and wisdom. Her struggle will be a strong one, and a thorough uprooting of former dispensations and ancient ideas; and consequently the world will undergo a great change in all the departments of her being; physically there will be a change, and all the inhabitants will be affected by this change, both in their mental and spiritual characteristics. The force of nature will partake of the improvement which has been going on within, and will develope more beauteous forms, that in time will exterminate the old, and thoroughly rid the earth of noisome things. The fable of the earth being about to be burned up, has originated from the great use the teachers in ancient times made of fire in their teaching; that being in their eyes the best means of illustrating the great lesson of purification and thorough cleansing, nothing evil ever remaining after the fire had been applied to it; all that was dross or rubbish would burn up, but whatever was lasting and consequently good and pure would remain; and thus the allegory has been taken literally by the modern teachers, who could not understand the more natural minds of the ancients, who loved to teach from nature, and took the sun as their best representative of life, and heat, and power. Hence fire, as a familiar illustration, being an earthly representative of the Great Sun God, they have used it mostly in their spiritual instruction.

A. G.

Castlemaine.

EXPERIENCE MEETING.

An interesting meeting was held at the Masonic Hall, on Wednesday, February 4th, at which Mr. John Carson related his experiences with the "Eddy Family," through whose mediumistic powers he obtained most satisfactory phenomena. At the first sitting, a number of musical instruments were placed on a bed in a small brick chamber, having no outlet but the door in the entrance to which the medium sat, the visitors facing her. In a few minutes the instruments tuned up and performed music which would have done credit to first-class professionals. The room was examined both before and immediately after the concert, but the performers were invisible. On another occasion, the fire bursting suddenly into a flame, broke the conditions, and the instruments fell in a shower amongst the investigators. Materialisations of a most satisfactory nature occured through the mediumship of William Eddy, at Ancora, some of the forms being distinctly recognised by Mr. Carson and his son. In answer to a question, Mr. Carson stated that the same materialised form had appeared to him, through different media, residing far apart from each other.

A SPIRIT'S NARRATIVE.

Just about two centuries ago I crossed the narrow boundary that separates the two worlds—the material from the spiritual. This time has not been idly spent, for ever active as I was *in* the form, still more active have I been since I left it. With intense pleasure I come to bestow a *little* of what I possess; not that I would give *grudgingly*, but with *discretion*. Two centuries of your time is a long period which cannot be bridged over in an instant. Be content to follow step by step, that you may have the pleasure of the whole journey.

On crossing over I was almost *dazed* with the glory that I beheld; for, having weaned myself from worldly things, I was prepared, so to speak, to enter upon things spiritual. Lovely as earth is in a lovely season, with its purling streams, its painted flowers, its songsters in the woods; glorious as are the hours of sunrise and of sunset; magnificent as is the dome of heaven bespangled with its millions of worlds; all the sweet voices of nature in its various moods—*all* these are as nought to the spiritual glories which met my enraptured gaze! Still I felt that I was part and parcel of the scene, for my own body was so much more glorious than the poor shell that I had left behind. Nor was I alone, for faces once familiar and beloved, surrounded me and gave me welcome. Oh! the happiness of such a meeting. And then, too, I found that I had a *home*—a house already prepared for me; no strange home either, for all seemed familiar, having, according to a wonderful law, been evolved with my spiritual growth. Thus, you see, those leaving earth *spiritually* undeveloped are *homeless*. Now, too, I found that all my yearnings after knowledge, spiritual and intellectual, could be gratified far more readily than when on earth, being no longer encumbered by the flesh. Did I long for information on any subject? Straightway my desire brought to me those who were in affinity with the thought, and who could instruct me. Thus have I gone on ever acquiring, and in my turn bestowing knowledge.

Life in the spirit-world is as natural as life on the earth planet, only far more perfect, for on earth it is often difficult to gratify the higher aspirations. In spirit-life these are gratified to the fullest extent. Here too the painter and the musician can carry out their ideal. He who on earth had longed to pour forth his soul in song can gratify that soul's ambition; and so on with every capacity of the mind. He who on earth had longed to excel in any direction can in spirit-life accomplish his unfulfilled desires. 'Tis here that Galileo and Copernicus study to their heart's delight. The genius that on earth had to lie dormant for want of opportunity, here germinates and bears fruit in abundance. Would not this knowledge alone make many a one long for the hour of separation from the material body?

Having been a man of versatile talent I had many longings to gratify; hence I have not been idle. Next to the pleasure of acquiring, has been my delight in the bestowing of this knowledge. It has been truly said, "Nothing have we that hath not been bestowed." The bookworm sits poring over his books, but a higher spirit or intelligence is near, pointing out the meaning to his intelligence. Even so in spirit-life. We are all receivers from those above. What folly, then, to boast of what we acquire! One of the hardest things, I think, is the tearing away of false notions and opinions—the tearing up by the roots of that which cost us so much labour to plant. Hence, those who enter spirit-life unprejudiced on all points have *great* advantage; but those who enter spirit-life, having benefited by spiritual teachings, have the greatest advantage of all.

(*To be continued.*)

A Social Gathering of members and friends of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists was held in the Masonic Hall last Wednesday evening. An excellent musical programme was presented and well carried out by the ladies and gentlemen of the choir, after which a quadrille party was formed and about two hours devoted to dancing. An enjoyable evening was spent and a very general desire expressed for a repetition of the meeting at an early date.

THE PRESENT CONDITION AND OUTLOOK OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

By J. Tyerman.

(*Continued from last number, p.* 1737.)

I have already pointed out that as Christianity makes extraordinary professions we are justified in trying it by a severer standard than would be applied to any admittedly human system; and have shown that it has signally failed in two parts of its boasted mission—to establish universal peace, and unite mankind in the bonds of true brotherhood. It may next be asked whether it has effected that *moral regeneration of society* which it claims to be alone able to bring about? This is declared to be its principal object, to attain which it is said to be in every way admirably adapted; and if it but accomplished this, other parts of its mission would be easily realised as a natural consequence. It condemns all other systems as being inadequate to the great work of the world's moral and spiritual transformation, its redemption from sin and sorrow, and its elevation to that purity and happiness its Creator designed it for. Some of them may lop a few twigs or a branch or two off the tree of human depravity, it alone can root it up and destroy it; they may throw a few crumbs to souls that are spiritually famishing, it alone can spread before them the bread of life in sufficient abundance to satisfy their wants, and make them healthy and strong; they may cast a gleam of light athwart the darkness that envelops the world, it alone can dispel that darkness, and illuminate man's pathway to a blissful immortality; in a word, they may render some little auxiliary aid in working out the salvation of the race, it alone can satisfactorily achieve that, being specially devised and set on foot by God himself for that purpose.

How far it has succeeded in its avowed mission, and thus justified its exceptional claims, let the present condition of the world decide. As a matter of fact, it is as yet unknown to the great majority of the human family. It has never been able to penetrate to hundreds of millions of so-called heathens. And even among those to whom it has been introduced, how few have been led to embrace it! The great mass of them have seen nothing either in its doctrines, or ceremonies, or the lives of those of its professors they were acquainted with, or its effects in countries where it has reigned supreme for centuries, to induce them to exchange for it the faith of their fathers. They have continued to think that their own religion was more reasonable in its teachings, and more beneficial in its influence than the one they were asked to accept in its stead; and, therefore, Christianity, with all its supposed evidences of a Divine origin, and its vaunted peculiar fitness for its professed God-given mission, has not commended itself to them. The barren results of missionary enterprises, when compared with the money, talent, and labour employed to convert the pagan world, gives full demonstration of this. And all the efforts of interested sectarians to explain this fact away, or rob it of its force, on the theory of human *depravity*, have failed to effect its real significance. People as a rule have intelligence and penetration enough to distinguish a *really* superior from an inferior article; and if the religious article in question had so far transcended all others in its intrinsic merits, as it is alleged to do, I am satisfied that the average heathen intellect would have perceived it. The fact that this has not been the case is strong evidence that no such superiority as is claimed for it exists; and, of course, as a necessary inference from this position, it would seem to be a becoming and righteous thing for our Christian friends to admit this failure of their system, and abandon their unfounded claims on its behalf. I can hardly expect such a humiliating confession to be made, yet, as the future gives no promise of greater success than the past has witnessed, the sooner it were made the better.

But if this is the case as regards the Pagan world, what shall we say as to the success of this religion in Christendom itself? If it could make so little impression in heathen lands, because of the antagonistic influence of other and older religions, at least it ought to have a splendid record of its achievements in those countries in which it has held undisputed sway for over fifteen hundred years. What is the moral and religious condition of Great Britain, France, Italy, Austria, Russia, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and other nations in which it has had the most favourable opportunities for demonstrating its boasted efficacy as the world's only hope? Is the condition of those highly privileged countries what might reasonably have been expected, if their controlling religion had been what it is said to be? I do not think the most ardent believer in that religion can honestly draw a very flattering picture of the moral state of those parts of the world. The political atmosphere in most of them is by no means pure, nor are either the social or religious departments in a satisfactory condition. Where are more commercial frauds perpetrated than in some of the most thoroughly Christian countries? In what part of the world does intemperance, with its untold evils, prevail to a greater extent, or can prostitution count more unhappy victims? Whither shall we look for more domestic strife, sadder instances of unfilial conduct on the part of children, or deeper poverty, squalor, and misery among the masses? In short, where shall we find more dishonesty, hypocrisy, falsehood, immorality, injustice, cruelty, and all the sins and vices that afflict mankind, than flourish under the very shadow of this so-called Divine system? Of course it will be said that Christianity does not sanction these evils; that on the contrary it emphatically condemns them, and aims at their complete and universal extermination, and that it has in some measure succeeded in its mission. But this is precisely what may be said of all other religions over which it affects so much superiority. And if it does not succeed any better than at least some of them do; nay, if in some parts of the world it does not succeed so well—as I think an impartial comparison of certain parts of Pagandom with certain parts of Christendom will prove it does not—what warrant is there for the lofty airs it assumes, and on what grounds can it claim a *Divine* origin for itself, and treat all other systems as only human inventions? The comparatively little success this religion has had in its efforts to regenerate society, where circumstances have been most favourable to it, is strong evidence that there is something fatally erroneous in its theory of human nature, and of the best means of elevating it; and that, therefore, it cannot have emanated from Infinite Wisdom.

In estimating the claims of Christianity to be the only religion that can save the world, we are naturally led to consider the time it had for the experiment, and the conditions under which it has been made. That it has not yet fulfilled this part of its professed mission the present state of the world abundantly proves. Can it be pleaded in its behalf that it has not had time enough, or that circumstances have always been unfavorable to it? It has been over eighteen hundred years in the field—a long enough period, surely, to test its capabilities in this direction; and during the most of that time it had a considerable portion of the world all to itself to experiment upon. At the present time tens of thousands of men, who have been specially trained for the purpose, are devoting themselves exclusively to the work of pressing its claims, unfolding its beauties, and demonstrating its axact adaptation to man's moral and spiritual requirements. Many other agencies are in operation with the same object in view. Millions of money are annually expended in the furtherance of its interests. And, of course, on the theory of its Divine origin, God must tax his infinite wisdom, and exercise his omnipotent powers on its behalf, that it may unfailingly accomplish the end for which he established it among men. And yet, with all those advantages as to time, opportunities, and means, it seems as far from attaining its desired object as ever it was. Nay, it is actually losing ground in those very countries where it has flourished the longest, and has had the best opportunities for justifying its pretensions. Various forms of opposition to it, under the general name of Infidelity, are spreading rapidly, and in many cases it has to content itself with simply taking up a defensive position.

For these reasons, then, I am compelled to hold that the present condition of the world does not justify the claim in question which Christianity puts forth to the exclusion of all other religions. (*To be continued.*)

ANTI-VACCINATION.

We have received from Mr. W. Tebb, of London, a parcel of anti-vaccination pamphlets, tracts, and papers, which we shall be happy, in accordance with that gentleman's desire, to distribute amongst those interested in agitating for a repeal of the Compulsory Vaccination Act, the operation of which is undermining the constitutions of large numbers of the rising generation. On receipt of stamp for postage we will send an assortment to any address.

By the *Spiritualist* of January 16th, *via* Brindisi, we have an account of the siezure of a well-known physical medium while apparently personating a spirit at the rooms of the B.N.A.S., London. The facts are admitted, but it is alleged on behalf of Mrs. Corner, that she was in the unconscious state; in fact, either possessed or biologised by an unwise spirit. In our next we hope to give more information in this matter.

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